



# Happiness Pony

Winter sleeps late.

HAPPINESSPONY.COM

FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2014.

A GIFT.



## HX Library

Burnt books from across the city. Science fiction & unconventional politics. Across from Diamond Chevrolet. Moving to Stone Soup in February.

### Placebos without Deception: A Randomized Controlled Trial in Irritable Bowel Syndrome

Ted J. Kaptechuk, Elizabeth Friedlander, John M. Kelley, M. Norma Sanchez, Efi Kokkotou, Joyce P. Singer, Magda Kowalczykowski, Franklin G. Miller, Irving Kirsch, Anthony J. Lembo

#### Background

Placebo treatment can significantly influence subjective symptoms. However, it is widely believed that response to placebo requires concealment or deception. We tested whether open-label placebo (non-deceptive and non-concealed administration) is superior to a no-treatment control with matched patient-provider interactions in the treatment of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

#### Findings

Open-label placebo produced significantly higher mean ( $\pm$ SD) global improvement scores (IBS-GIS) at both 1-day midpoint ( $5.2 \pm 1.0$  vs.  $4.0 \pm 1.1$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and at 21-day endpoint ( $5.0 \pm 1.5$  vs.  $3.9 \pm 1.3$ ,  $p = .002$ ). Significant results were also observed at both time points for reduced symptom severity (IBS-SSS,  $p = .008$  and  $p = .03$ ) and adequate relief (IBS-AR,  $p = .02$  and  $p = .03$ ); and a trend favoring open-label placebo was observed for quality of life (IBS-QoL) at the 21-day endpoint ( $p = .08$ ).

#### Conclusion

Placebos administered without deception may be an effective treatment for IBS. Further research is warranted in IBS, and perhaps other conditions, to elucidate whether physicians can benefit patients using placebos consistent with informed consent.

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# 508:

a show about Worcester

7pm Fridays on  
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CLASSIFIED ADS

BOOKS, YIDDISH+ENGLISH

Not In The Same Breath by Zackary Sholem Berger: 1/3 Yiddish, 1/3 English, 2/3 Pretty Pictures. [bit.ly/NITSBAmaazon](http://bit.ly/NITSBAmaazon)

Cat In The Hat and Curious George in Yiddish. [yiddishcat.com](http://yiddishcat.com)

MUGS, TIKI

Scallywag Ceramics. Exotic curiosities. [scallywagceramics.com](http://scallywagceramics.com)

## There Is a Mid-Winter Festival Hidden in Plain Sight

Groundhog Day, Candlemas, St. Brigid's Day, and the old Gaelic festival of Imbolc are all mid-winter holidays that basically happen on the same day every year. By that day, midway between the winter solstice and the spring equinox, you know for sure that the days are getting longer. It's still winter, but you know you're going to make it. So you do things like bless all the candles you'll need for the coming year (if you're a Christian), or study the behavior of giant hibernating ground squirrels to predict the onset of spring (if you're a Pennsylvanian). You might welcome Brigid (the saint or goddess) into your home (if you're Irish). It's a time of purification and light.

The mid-winter festival is a great day to consider how your New Year's Resolutions are going, and if necessary toss them out to prepare your life for spring. Candlemas is when I officially start planning for Lent. That means starting to think about what I might want to give up, and asking my non-Christian friends if they're observing Lent this year (many of them do!). It's also a good day to start fantasizing about your garden (if you haven't) and to do a little something to get started on your taxes.

Candlemas—now my favorite neglected holiday. (*Mike Benedetti. Photo of Elm Park in winter by Kayti Burt.*)



#### Arctic Blast

This winter we've had wondrous temperature readings of zero and single digits even *before* calculating the wind chill. We New Englanders are inclined to view this cold as medicinal. It must be good for us and for our wilds. Truth is, there is just a little something to that, even if it is no cure-all tonic.

Many of the wildflowers, trees, and other plants we associate with New England are cold-tolerant. They have to be, because it gets really cold here. Think of the Black spruce trees and alpine wildflowers atop the mountains. They are extreme plants. Take away the extreme and you get run-of-the-mill plants. Think also of iconic Sugar maples, Rock maples, and all manner of evergreens in our woods. They too perform best in cold climates. Even our frogs are full of antifreeze and buried deep in the mud right now, and our fish are skulking deep in the cold recesses of our ponds.

Our monster weeds and invasive insects are not from here. Many are tropical, and this cold will set them back. The Ailanthus or "Tree of Heaven" is from the Caribbean islands, and snaps when faced with the worst of our cold and wind.

Each winter we draw down our ponds and leave the shallows exposed to the elements, hoping Mother Nature will freeze and kill the roots of our aquatic weeds. *This* is just the sort of winter to do the trick!

The Hemlock woolly adelgid that is killing all of our Hemlock trees is responsive to the cold and its march northward seems to peter out as it reaches the colder sections of New England. The freezing temperatures kill adult Asian Longhorned beetles, limiting their egg-laying to just one season. Sadly, their eggs and pupae are buried deep in insulated trees and are cold-tolerant. But let's stay positive.

Make no mistake, this is just one helpful wave of arctic air amidst a warming tide. And the tide is coming in. This cold wave, at best, bought us a little time. But, back to the positive! Let it freeze! Hard! (*Colin Novick*)

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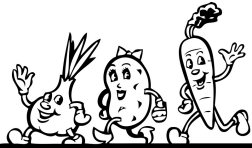
Movie Review:  
Austenland

This movie makes "Un Chien Andalou" look like "Pants-Off Dance-Off." (*JD*)

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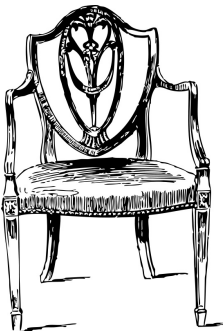


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Winter World

A BOOK BY BERND HEINRICH, REVIEWED BY JUSTIN DUFFY

As a child, I created a limited set of scenarios that I would imagine before falling asleep.

1. Being stationed in the remote Arctic.
2. Being a snake in a pile of hibernating snakes. Sometimes the snakes would have high-tech equipment.
3. Being part of the maintenance crew on humanity's last ditch mission to survive under the sea after destroying Earth's surface. Everything goes smoothly.
4. Being a small furry mammal in a network of subnivean\* tunnels.

Bernd Heinrich's *Winter World: The Ingenuity of Animal Survival* is the book of my dreams. Specifically, scenarios 1, 2, and 4. Heinrich details incredible tales of animal survival interspersed with scientific research and observations on the woods. All of which nonchalantly reveal his innate badassery. In 1983, Heinrich set the American record for longest distance run in 24 hours with a total of 156 miles, 1388 yards\*. He didn't even mention that in this book, that's how cool he is.

For many small, ground-dwelling animals, hibernation involves going into a near-death state called **torpor**. Heartbeats slow to a few beats per hour, core temperatures drop extremely low (sometimes below the freezing point of water) as animals seek to maintain what meager reserves of energy they have left stored as fat. Incredibly, many mammals consume approximately fifty percent of their metabolic reserves rousing themselves from this state for about a day per month. Why? Well, the honest answer is that we don't know. The most likely explanation is: to dream. Scientists have observed Arctic ground squirrels arising from torpor to enter into REM sleep, the same sleep stage during which humans dream.



Skull Shining Breath

*Kapalabhati* is a yogic breathing technique practiced to cleanse. Also called the "skull shining breath," *Kapalabhati* is a rapid succession of short, strong exhalations. We use the lungs as a pump to create pressure so great that tension and rubbish are cleared from the airways and lungs, up through the nostrils.

To practice *Kapalabhati*, sit cross-legged, rest your arms in a comfortable position, and lengthen your spine. Inhale comfortably. As you exhale, draw your abdominal muscles in and up with sharp, forceful deliberation.

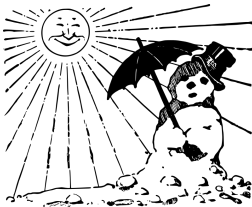
The in-breath is passive, happening automatically. Try rounds of thirty breaths each, always returning to deep inhales and exhales between each round.

If ever you feel light-headed, take care to return to normal breathing.

In the wintertime, we sometimes feel heavy, foggy, and numb. *Kapalabhati* is a good thing to do this time of year to bring lightness, clarity, and warming energy to the body-mind. (*Patricia Kirkpatrick*)

*an excerpt from  
Winter World*  
A convincing demonstration that dehydration secondarily confers freezing tolerance can be found in the larvae of the African desert fly (*Polypedilum vanderplanki*) which periodically dry up in the temporary desert pools within which they live. The larvae are adapted to survive losing 92 percent of their body water, and such desiccated larvae are essentially immortal and can survive immersion in liquid helium (to -269 degrees C), within 4 degrees C or potentially at absolute zero, or 0 degrees K, the lowest temperature in the universe. When rehydrated by dropping them into water they become "instant insects". (*Bernd Heinrich*)

\* Subnivean: in and under the snow.



\* [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernd\\_Heinrich](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernd_Heinrich)



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Winter sleeps late.  
*Bruce Russell*



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Happiness Pony is a free monthly newspaper published in Worcester, Massachusetts. This issue was edited by Jen Burt & Mike Benedetti. Masthead by Aiden Duffy from a 1775 issue of the <i>Massachusetts Spy</i> . <a href="mailto:editor@happinesspony.com">editor@happinesspony.com</a>	